(ग) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं?

कृषि मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री सोम पाल): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) से (घ) देश में 1 अप्रैल 1985 से व्यापक फसल बीमा योजना पहले ही कार्यान्वयनाधीन है। योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य किसानों को प्राकृतिक आपदा के कारण फसल के अभाव में उन्हें जो हानि होती है, उससे किसानों को बचाना और आगामी मौसम के लिए उनकी ऋण पात्रता को बनाए रखना है। यह योजना उन सभी किसानों को शामिल करती है जो गेहूं, धान, कदन्न (मक्का सहित), तिलहन एवं दलहन उगाने के लिए ग्रामीण वित्तीय संस्थाओं से फल ऋण का लाभ उठाते है।

विद्यमान व्यापक फसल बीमा योजना में किसानों व फसलों की कवरेज को बढ़ाने की दृष्टि से, सरकार ने खरीफ, 1999 मौसम से संशोधित व्यापक फसल बीमा योजना शुरू करने का निर्णय लिया है।

Production of Foodgrains

940. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated the 16th February, 1999 captioned "IPRI lands India's higher food yield";

(b) if so, what are the details of latest report published by the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, concerning India; and

(c) whether India can produce twice the 150 million tons of foodgrains produced in 1998, if we have the right technology from science and research and apply if properly through the right policies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) As per the news-item, the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo has commended India's achievements in achieving food self-sufficiency with adoption of high yielding seeds and extensions services. According to news-item, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) have estimated that the hungry regions of the World can produce twice the food they now produce, if they have the right technology from science, and can apply it properly through right policies.

The production of foodgrains during 1998-99 estimated at 195.25 million tonnes. It is possible to double the food production if appropriate incentives, institutions, infrastructure and innovations are made available.

Retirement age for ICAR Scientists

941. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the benefits of retirement at 62 years have been extended to ICAR scientists who are governed by UGC norms;

(b) if not, the reasons for not issuing the notification and the scientists being allowed to retire by default;

(c) the number of scientists of ICAR who have retired since Government's notification in respect of other institutions governed by UGC norms was issued;

(d) the reasons for not freezing retirement among agricultural scientists of ICAR in consonance with the defence staff pending implementation of revised age of superannuation in the defence department; and

(e) the time by when it is likely to materialise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Scientists of ICAR are not automatically covered by UGC norms. However, on receipt of Ministry of HRD notification for revision of pay scales of teachers of Universities & Colleges including benefits of retirement at 62 years, the Council has taken up these issues with the appropri-

ate authorities for extending these benefits to the ICAR Scientists.

(c) 89 Scientists of ICAR have retired since July, 1998 when the Govt. notification in respect of UGC Teachers was issued.

(d) While the Govt. of India has enhanced the age of retirement from 58 to 60 years in respect of Central Govt. employees recently, the ICAR Scientists have already been enjoying the benefits of retirement at 60 years of age. Decision of the Govt. of India for further enhancement of age of retirement from 60 to 62 years in respect of ICAR Scientists will thus have prospective effect & there is no justification for freezing the age retirement of the Scientists.

(e) As it is a major policy decision, it is not possible to fix any time limit.

Decline in Area under Wheat and Rice Cultivation

942. Dr. B.B. DUTTA:
SHRI VAYALAR RAVI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the area under cultivation of paddy and wheat is not increasing in the country;

(b) what are the details of paddy and wheat production and area of cultivation in different States; and

(c) whether steps have been taken to increase the area of cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) There is generally an increasing trend in area under cultivation of paddy and wheat in the country. The state-wise details of area and production of rice and wheat during last three years are given in the enclosed statement. (*see below*).

(c) In order to increase production and productivity of paddy and wheat, the Government is implementing Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Rice/Wheat Based Cropping systems Areas in different states under which incentives are provided to farmers for use of quality seeds and location specific high yielding/hybrid varieties, application of integrated pest management, propagation of scientific water management including micro irrigation, improved farm implements etc. Besides, field demonstrations on farmers holdings including training of farmers and farm labourers are organised for effective transfer of technology. Further, under the national agenda for governance, the Government has set priorities for doubling food production in next ten years, adopting regionally differentiated growth strategies, creation of farming infrastructure and more efficient use of resources. In addition, the Government announces Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of paddy/wheat and undertakes market support operations.